
UTAH OGM COAL PROGRAM MEETING NOTES

Meeting Date: February 18, 2009

To: Internal File, West Ridge Mine, C/007/0041, Task # 3113

From: Coal Regulatory Program

Note taker: Ingrid Wieser

Attendees: Jeff Studenka (DWQ), Jeff Brower (BLM), Steve Christensen (DOGM), Daron Haddock (DOGM), Joe Helfrich (DOGM), Steve Rigby (BLM/FS), Mike Glasson (BLM), Sue Wiler (BLM), Stephen Falk (BLM), Karla Knoop (JBR), Dave Shaver (West Ridge), Tyler Ashcroft (BLM), Mike Stiewig (BLM), Mike Robinson (BLM).

Purpose: To discuss the passive vs. active approach to the West Ridge Mine coal fines cleanup.

MEETING SUMMARY:

Mike Stiewig of the BLM briefly discussed the BLM's opinion that a passive cleanup would be a better plan because it wouldn't alter the armory of the stream bed and we wouldn't risk sending coal fines down stream to grassy trail creek. The BLM did not want the mine to use the active cleanup approach, which was to use brooms to move the coal fines into catch basins. The BLM hydrologist, Jeff Brower, enforced this opinion by adding that the fines were not a toxic substance and a passive, long term approach would be acceptable.

Dave Shaver went over his two-phase plan to clean up the coal fines. Phase I is to install four catchment basins along the stream channel (Basins 'A', 'C', 'E' and 'F' as depicted on the BLM plan). The water will be diverted from the area, and the channels will be dug out to form a basin approximately 4' deep and 40' long. A dam will be formed at the end of the basin with a series of excelsior logs and rocks in an attempt to catch the majority of the coal fines. Once the basin fills up with sediment and coal fines, the water will again be diverted and the coal fines/sediment will be removed and transported to a waste facility. Phase II of the cleanup is to either use an active approach with a crew of people with brooms to dislodge the heavy fines, or a passive approach by allowing the stream to push the fines into the basins. As a back up plan, West Ridge will install two sediment ponds further down the stream than the basins in order to settle out remaining fines. Mr. Shaver discussed the need for coordinated and effective communication during the active clean-up phase. He indicated that it would be crucial for the clean-up crews who were removing the coal fine material to be in direct communication with their co-workers at the catch basins. Once the dislodged coal material filled the catch basins, the active removal by the crews upstream would be stopped in order to allow the flow to be diverted around the catch basins and the accumulated material be removed. Once the catch basins were cleaned out, the water would be re-routed into the drainage and the cleaning would resume. Mr. Shaver indicated that all four of the catch basins would be constructed prior to any active clean up work is performed.

DOGM employees as well as Jeff Studenka of DWQ, shared their opinion that the active approach was more feasible. The water discharge from the mine could only last two more years, so a

quicker cleanup was favored. Daron Haddock brought up the possibility of the mine shutting down in the near future due to MSHA's stipulations regarding the longwall. Dave Shaver said that it was not likely, but always a possibility. Also, the catchment basins would not be able to withstand a storm event which would send most of the fines into the confluence with grassy creek trail, so the quicker the cleanup takes, the less likely a storm event will occur.

Joe Helfrich went over the West Ridge NOV written by DOGM. The group decided that the easiest way to monitor the NOV requirement to immediately stop coal fine contributions to the stream was to monitor the water that was discharging from the mine. West Ridge has committed to taking two samples per month for all parameters. Bringing the mine-water discharge back into consistent compliance with their UPDES permit was discussed. The Division would be able to make a finding that the mine was no longer contributing additional sediment outside the permit area once their effluent meets their UPDES limits. An official cleanup plan is due to the Division by February 28th in order to comply with abatement.

Mr. Christensen (DOGM) iterated the necessity for the mine water discharge to be brought back into compliance before any clean-up effort began. Until the underground mine water consistently meets effluent limitations, Mr. Christensen asserted that any clean-up efforts would be fruitless. The BLM staff agreed. Mr. Shaver has postulated that the mine works that the in-mine water is currently being routed to is probably filled with sediment and as a result, not offering adequate settling time. As such, the mine plans on routing the mine water further up-dip in hopes of providing more time for the coal fine material to settle out prior to discharge. However, the distance between the current routing point and the proposed one is fairly small. It's unclear as to whether this approach will provide adequate detention/settling time. Mr. Shaver's hope is to route the mine water to the western mine works upon the completion of the currently mined panel. The mine water would be routed through a significantly larger section of gob area up-dip from the discharge point. This option would clearly be the favored approach for treating the mine water, as it would significantly increase the distance and settling time. However, with the issues MSHA has raised in recent days, coupled with the stoppage of all mining activity, it's unclear as to when or if this approach could be implemented. Mr. Shaver indicated that a hearing is scheduled for Friday between OSM and West Ridge mine personnel to discuss whether or not the currently mined panel will be completed.

The group concluded that the catchment basins were being installed regardless of the active or passive approach. We also concluded that we would walk the entire channel in the spring with a GPS to obtain qualitative baseline data. The active approach will be tested on small sections, once the basins are installed, and the water will be monitored to see how many coal fines are getting past the basins. At that time, the cleanup approach will be re-evaluated to determine the best approach. Once the channel is cleaned up according to West Ridge, the group will walk the channel again and compare it to the baseline information.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) Dave Shaver will submit the official plan to DOGM by February 28, 2009. Water samples will also be submitted to DWQ and DOGM and will have to meet effluent standards as soon as possible.
- 2.) Interested participants will walk the channel to obtain baseline information once the snow melts.
- 3.) Dave Shaver will continue with construction of catchment A, and the others as BLM approval is granted.
- 4.) Dave Shaver will continue with SITLA permitting for the potential sediment ponds that will be located in Section 36 as a back up plan to the catchments.
- 5.) The BLM and DOGM will reconvene to discuss the cleanup process once the catchments are installed and a section has been tested with the active approach.